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Instructions

S. B. H. No. 112--1882.

Vaccination of School Children.

ILLINOIS STATE BOARD OF HEALTH.

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY,

SPRINGFIELD, SEPTEMBER 20, 1882.

To County Superintendents, School Boards and Teachers:

Communications received since the beginning of the present school year, indicate the necessity for renewed instructions concerning the School Vaccination Order of the STATE BOARD OF HEALTH, promulgated in December, 1881.

The Order has been complied with to a very gratifying extent. Its wisdom and utility have been demonstrated by the facts—

First.—That among the thousands of cases of small-pox which have occurred in the State since the Order was issued, not one is reported of a public scholar who had been properly or recently vaccinated. Several cases, however, with a large proportion of deaths, have occurred among scholars who had either not been vaccinated at all or not since infancy.

Second.—That in no instance where the Order was thoroughly enforced has it been necessary to close the public schools, even when small-pox existed in a community. On the other hand, schools have been broken up and studies interrupted in a number of instances where—as shown by the returns in this office—the Order had been neglected.

In some of these latter cases the failure to enforce the Order was due to causes which no longer exist. The present is a very favorable season of the year in which to vaccinate. Good vaccine matter can be readily procured, and the operation is not now liable to be complicated by the results which obtain in cold and changeable weather.

CONCERNING the statements sometimes met with—of serious results from vaccination, loss of arms and even death—the Secretary takes occasion to say that he has made it his personal duty to investigate every report of the kind which has come to his knowledge. The net result of such investigations is that not one such report has been substantiated. He has been wholly unable to find any evidence of a death caused by vaccination, in this State, or even of permanent injury or serious illness, due to the operation alone. He does know, however,

of hundreds of deaths—aside from the suffering, the loss of sight and the disfigured faces among survivors—caused by the neglect of vaccination.

THERE have been probably 2,000,000 persons vaccinated in the State of Illinois during the past eighteen months, and precisely in the ratio of such vaccinations in any given community is the assurance of freedom from interruption of the public schools, and immunity from danger of outbreaks of small-pox during the coming winter. Wherever a community includes any considerable number of unprotected persons there is, not merely a liability, but an almost absolute certainty of trouble during the approaching cold weather, since the infection will inevitably find its way into the State again from other infected localities during the winter. Recent outbreaks in some of the river counties clearly foreshadow this result, and these outbreaks will be much more serious than now, when doors and windows are kept open and free ventilation and atmospheric disinfection may be secured. The indications are that the winter of 1882-3 will be a severe one, and such winters are, on the one hand, unfavorable to vaccination, while on the other, their conditions favor the propagation and spread of small-pox contagion.

AN examination of the reports thus far received shows that more than two-thirds of the total school population of Illinois, were unprotected against small-pox on the 1st of December, 1881.

Of the two million vaccinations within the past eighteen months, over thirteen hundred thousand have been performed since the first of January, 1882, as the result mainly of this Vaccination Order, and of similar measures instituted by the State and local Boards of Health. Until these measures were fairly under way there was a steady increase of the small-pox—but coincidently with their successful operation came the decline of the disease, until now it is practically at an end in Illinois.*

* The recent outbreaks above alluded to do not conflict with this statement. That in Monroe county was caused by an infected mattress thrown into the Mississippi river, and which lodged on Staten Island, near Harrisonville. Some unvaccinated persons came in contact with the mattress, and a number of cases ensued. Thence it was carried into Randolph county, where it found a number of other unvaccinated individuals near Prairie du Rocher, and caused an outbreak among them, with three deaths at date of last report, September 14th. In Alexander county, near Goose Island and Promised Land, some 19 cases and 4 deaths have resulted from infection brought also from the river. All these cases were among unvaccinated persons.

From present indications, the chief source of danger is along the Mississippi river, south of St. Louis. The Immigrant-Inspection Service of the National Board of Health has diminished the danger of importations from the east to the minimum. Many of the Mississippi and Arkansas river-counties have, however, been severely visited, and the conditions of life among the negro population of that region are not such as to warrant the belief that the contagion will be readily "stamped out" among them. It is liable to be introduced into the State from this source at any time until the disease dies out there for the want of material. And wherever introduced, it will find its victims among the unprotected.

It remains now to perfect and perpetuate the results thus far accomplished, and to this end—so far as the public schools are concerned—the following instructions are issued with reference to the School Vaccination Order:

1. The Order is permanent and continuous. At the beginning of the school year teachers must satisfy themselves of the vaccinal status of each of their scholars. This will be done in the case of scholars who were in attendance during the last term, by an examination of the vaccinal record required to be kept by the teachers, or by an examination of the scholar's certificates. Scholars whose records are imperfect, as well as all new pupils, must present to the teacher (a) certificates of proper vaccinal protection; or (b) certificates that they are protected by previous attacks of small-pox or varioloid; or (c) that they are insusceptible to vaccination; or (d) that their physical condition is such as to make it imprudent to vaccinate at the present time.

Proper vaccinal protection means a successful vaccination in a child not yet arrived at the age of puberty; or, if beyond that age, a successful vaccination or re-vaccination, as the case may be, performed within the past two years (approximately.)

The certificates above described must be signed in all cases by legally qualified physicians.

2. Certificates must be returned to the scholars after the teacher has made the entries necessary to fill out the *Vaccination Return* (Form 52) to the STATE BOARD OF HEALTH. The certificates must not be sent to this office.

It is recommended that each teacher be provided with a book—*Vaccination Record*—in which to keep a permanent record of the vaccinal history of the scholars.

3. *Vaccination Returns* (Form 52) accounting for every child whose name appears on the School Schedule, must be forwarded to this office at the end of the *second* month of the school year.* The name of the child only need be given on this *Return*—provided *all* the data concerning it have been given on a previous *Return*. In such cases the words *Previously reported* should follow the child's name. If the child's record was imperfect on the previous *Return*, all the data now on hand should be given, as well as all data pertaining to new pupils.

Supplemental *Returns* must be made at the end of each term, embracing all new pupils and the perfected records of those previously returned imperfectly.

4. Copies of *Vaccination Certificates* (Form 51) and of the *Vaccination Returns* (Form 52), will be furnished on application to the Secretary. Copies of the Order may also be obtained.

* This modification of the original order, which required *Returns* to be forwarded at the end of the *first* month, is made in order to give teachers more time to perfect the *Returns*.

IN some localities the vaccination of school children had been enforced before the receipt of the certificates and blanks prepared by the BOARD. From some of these no reports have yet been received. As it is desired to ascertain the condition of the entire school population with reference to this question, teachers, superintendents and other school officers cognizant of the facts are respectfully requested to inform the Secretary as to (1) the total number of scholars in any such locality; (2) the total number properly protected against small-pox; (3) the total number vaccinated or re-vaccinated within the past two years. Copies of the certificates in use, as well as of circulars, notices, etc., which have been issued, are also desired.

It is suggested that School Boards might materially facilitate the enforcement of this measure, by embodying its purport in the form of one of their own regulations. They have the necessary power and authority to do this, and in the numerous instances where such a course has been pursued, it has worked very successfully. The STATE BOARD would prefer this, because, for one among other reasons, the school boards are in more intimate relation with the teachers and scholars.

It is hardly necessary to again state that every teacher should comply with this requirement as fully as any scholar. School Boards are authorized to demand that each teacher employed shall present evidence of proper protection against the liability of conveying contagion into the midst of his or her pupils.

THE thanks of the STATE BOARD are tendered to the County Superintendents, School Boards and Teachers generally, for the cordial support and coöperation they have accorded to this effort. It is largely due to them that the school population of Illinois is undoubtedly better protected against small-pox than that of any State in the Union of the same age, and is probably not excelled in this respect by any of the older Commonwealths.

BY ORDER OF THE BOARD:

JOHN H. RAUCH, M. D.,

Secretary.

County Superintendents may obtain additional copies of this Circular, if necessary, by addressing the Secretary. Its prompt and general distribution is respectfully urged.